

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01

INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 SP-02 CIEP-02

LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04 CEA-01 NIC-01

AGR-10 TAR-01 DODE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 L-02 H-02

IO-10 ARA-10 EA-10 /142 W
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5759

INFO ALL CONSULTATES IN CANADA

UNCLAS OTTAWA 0712

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, CA, CU

SUBJECT: FURTHER RESIDUALS OF VISIT TO CANADA BY PRESIDENT OF
CUBAN NATIONAL BANK

REF: A. OTTAWA 694; B. OTTAWA 628

1. ACCORDING TO CP ITEM CARRIED IN OTTAWA PRESS FEBRUARY 20,
RAUL LEON TORRES SIDESTEPED QUESTIONS ON INTERFERENCE
OF AMERICAN LAW WITH CANADIAN EXPORTS, INDICATING IT IS
UP TO CANADA TO PROTECT ITS CUBAN MARKET. IN FEBRUARY 19
PRESS CONFERENCE LEON REPORTEDLY DISPLAYED NO CONCERN
THAT U.S. LAW HAD HAMPERED EXPORTS FROM CANADAIN
SUBSIDIARIES TO CUBA.

2. HE WOULD ONLY SAY, ACCORDING TO CP, THAT CUBA'S
TRADING CORPORATION ALWAYS INTERESTED IN HEARING FROM
CANADIAN COMPANIES, AMONG COMPANIES IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES.
HE REPORTEDLY GAVE SAME ANSWER WHEN ASKED WHAT WOULD
HAPPEN TO CANADIAN SALES TO CUBA IF U.S. LIFTED ITS
EMBARGO.

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3. TORONTO FINANCIAL POST OF FEBRUARY 22 CARRIED
ARTICLE BY CLIVE BAXTER CONTAINING FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE
QUOTES ATTRIBUTED TO LEON:

BEGIN VERBATIM TEXT: THERE IS MORE INTEREST IN
CUBA NOW, ALTHOUGH, MIND YOU, OUR RELATIONS WITH
CANADIAN BANKS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN GOOD.

WE ARE NOW GOING THROUGH OUR NEXT EXPANSION
PERIOD, UP TO 1980. WE HAVE PLANS TO EXPAND A NUMBER
OF INTERESTS, INCLUDING SPENDING ABOUT \$840 MILLION
MODERNIZING OUR SUGAR INDUSTRY. WE ARE EXPANDING THE
TEXTILE BUSINESS, FERTILIZER, CEMENT, FOOD CANNING,
AND SEVERAL OTHERS.

CUBA IS ALSO PUSHING AHEAD WITH TOURISM. LAST
YEAR, WE HAD 15,000 VISITORS. THIS YEAR, IT WILL BE
50,000. WE EXPECT 20,000 OF THEM WILL BE CANADIANS.

(QUESTION: IS CUBA REALLY CHANGING ITS WAY
NOW, WITH NEW WEALTH? IS IT READY TO INVITE OUTSIDERS --
THE JAPANESE, EVEN CANADIANS -- TO INVEST IN THIS NEW
GROWTH?)

NO, CERTAINLY NOT. WE WON'T HAVE ANY EQUITY
INVESTMENT. WHAT WE WANT IS THE RIGHT TO BUY -- FOR
CASE -- NEW IDEAS AND EQUIPMENT. WE ARE READY TO DO
THAT. AND WE WANT TO FORM JOINT SELLING ARRANGEMENTS
FOR INTERNATIONAL SALES OF WHAT WE MAY PRODUCE.

THAT IS WHAT WE HAVE ARRANGED WITH JAPAN,
AND WE WANT TO DO IT WITH OTHERS. END VERBATIM TEXT.

4. BAXTER CONCLUDED ARTICLE BY STATING THAT JOINT
INTERNATIONAL SELLING ARRANGEMENTS WAS A MAJOR TOPIC
DURING LEON'S VISIT TO CANADA AND THIS TOPIC BOUND
TO BE HIGH ON THE LIST WHEN THE GILLESPIE-LED MISSION
IS IN CUBA NEXT MONTH.
PORTER

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